

The Collegian commentary

By Jim Martin Executive Editor

Who's Right is Right

Social Sciences I is a course that I'm enrolled in this term. The students in it are expected to read such books as Bronowski, *The Common Sense of Science*; Boulding, *Impact of the Social Sciences*; and Andrey, *The Social Contract*. You all know the type, the ones you fall asleep by. The books just seem to ramble on profusely and you hear enough 'bragging' in and out of class let alone have to read more. Anyway, the subject must be studied, therefore, the books are read. So I'm into the third text, *The Social Contract*, and I start to recognize parallels and apply concepts between it and today's society.

Newspaper, magazine, and radio headlines this year have all included stories about schools closed, houses burning left unattended, stores being robbed, and trash left to rot on city streets because teachers, firemen, policemen, and sanitation workers have gone on strike.

I've read about longshoremen refusing to load ships for sea, paralyzing a good part of our commerce, because they do not approve of selling grain to Russia. Police have had to accompany children to school to protect them from stones thrown by parents. Not long ago, the truck drivers blocked the highways because they were disgruntled at new speed limits. They still continually exceed the 55 m.p.h. limit. We have been threatened with a halt to the nations mail service by postal employees. A possible railroad shutdown looms.

The common factor related in all these headlines of actual incidents is that they reflect a grievance of some people (in our society) to hold the rest of the people at bay. The question is: What is the relationship between the members of society and the society of which they are members? A strike of city employees or bus drivers if prolonged is not just inconvenience, but becomes an injury to the city. In the case of firemen or policemen, the result is immediate danger to every citizen. What is happening

today is the confrontations between the right of the individual in refusing to work and the right of the public itself.

Also, mail workers and truck drivers are not technically public employees, yet the health and well-being of the entire community depends upon them. If they strike, the nation is soon paralyzed. If they are not allowed to strike, what of their rights to complain of grievances? If they do strike, what recourse has the public? And the problem grows.....

The problem grows because the times are such that more and more of us are unmindful of what Rousseau called the social contract. It is the unspoken agreement that in order to live together in society, we must forgo things we might otherwise claim a "right" to do.

"The passing from the state of nature to the civil state produces in man a very remarkable change," wrote Rousseau, a liberal philosopher. "Man loses by the social contract his natural liberty and an unlimited right to all which tempts him. In return, he acquires civil liberty... We must distinguish between natural liberty which has no bounds but the power of the individual, from civil liberty which is limited by the general will."

For the most part, we are hardly aware of how much we depend upon this unspoken social contract to live peaceably among ourselves. It is the binder that holds society together.

We are a nation of laws. We have many to protect the weak from the strong, to prohibit murder, arson, rape, theft or even speeding dangerously on the highways. But these civil laws depend upon the fact that society as a whole already accepts these restrictions upon individual action as a condition of living together. The laws are for the minority who do not accept the social contract.

The assumption of society of the social contract is that doctors will treat the sick and lawyers defend those accused even though each individual may have a

"right" to decline a patient or a client.

Similarly, society expects that the old will rear the young and the young care for the old. It expects each of us to bear our share of the common costs, that is pay our taxes, for our defense or whatever else the community undertakes.

Everyone has a right to disagree with and speak against any public policy—say that of selling grain to the Russians—but when a small group consents to block that public policy of the whole, social fabric is threatened. No one is required to be a policeman or a fireman. But to become one is to accept a special obligation not to walk off the job, leaving society itself in peril..

Society must also honor its part of the contract. It must beware of laws which are not generally accepted and invite defiance. And if the individual is asked to forgo the right to strike, society must take care that what it promises in return, a decent wage and security of employment, is delivered. Who should expect loyalty from a policeman who does not know whether tomorrow he will have a job?

The remedy lies only in all of us remembering how fragile are the ties that bind the society in which we live.

Consciousness III verses consciousness IV

By Robert P. Radziszewski

Once upon a time, there was something Charles Reich (*Greening of America*, 1970) described as Consciousness III. Consciousness III was the youthful college generation of the 60's and the early 70's, a generation of love and peace which actually gave a damn about social injustice and the increasing amount of power being wielded by the imperialistic American government. These were the saviors of America and this was the revolution which could not be stopped. So Charles Reich thought.

Consciousness III is in danger of extinction. It has been replaced by Consciousness IV, the modly-dressed swingers of the 70's, who care about nothing but money and success, and as one student put it, "who to bump with at the next dance."

This is the generation of shaped hair and clean-shaven faces.

They are the faces of foolishness and greed that closely resemble those of generations ago. The faces are here and on every other campus in America. They are the faces that turned America into Amerika.

Consciousness IV listens to something called "glitter rock." This is the music of mindlessness, of Kiss doing "Strutter", or of Elton John singing of lifesaving.

It is the music of enormous pretension, where breathing fire and wearing diamond-studded

clothes are greeted with awe and incredulity by an escape-seeking and immature audience. Words of protest no longer make money, so no one bothers to write them, although there are a few exceptions. The days of Dylan are gone.

Consciousness IV wears clothes of great plasticity and in these clothes they hide from cruel realities which do not affect them directly.

The ragged jeans of C III have been replaced by ones costing four times as much, or have been done away with completely. Old jeans are no longer patched, but thrown away.

Sweatshirts and workshirts have been replaced by the flowered chemise with the fly-away collar. Sneakers have evolved to high-heeled shoes. The slovenly but honest look of C III has been transformed into the deceptive look of elitism. They wear these clothes to homecoming dances and football games while volunteer services cry out for help and the American military system steadily grows in power, virtually unchecked. They are ever so cool.

Consciousness IV is the generation of television. They laugh at minorities in prison, at soldiers in Korea. They enjoy the good times in the ghetto and share the mindlessness of a generation twenty years earlier. They do not know the meaning of false consciousness. They are the generation of the thirty-second commercial, where the mindlessness they so faultlessly exhibit is encouraged and reinforced. They become products themselves to be made attractive to the highest bidder in the business community. The technical name is prostitute.

Consciousness IV wants the good life for themselves, no matter what the cost to others. They envision apartments in the suburbs and children growing up to continue the nonsensical cycle they have trapped themselves within.

Success is measured by money and status. They are blind to the child growing up in one of America's countless slums who has gained leadership of his gang by committing first-degree murder.

They do not breathe the poisoned air or drink the poisoned water. The thought of missing an evening meal is terrifying and they cannot understand how a child in India can "be so skinny."

They constantly question the leniency of a compassionate judge who sees work-release and probation as viable solutions to inhuman prison conditions, and yet they feel sorry for "the dumb animal behind bars" when they visit a zoo. Their hypocrisy is boundless, threatening the existence of those who will not play their games.

Consciousness IV has accepted some questionable heroes. Lt. William Calley was only under orders and should be pardoned.

Burford Pusser is the answer to rising crime rates and Evel Knievel will go down in history as a great American legend.

Consciousness IV has accepted these caricatures without question for they are sadly in need of something to believe in. They lack the initiative to explore what these men stand for, and thus they expel them. Some may understand these men and still idolize them. They are truly fools.

Consciousness IV is a terrible mutation of Consciousness III.

letters varying viewpoints

Dear Editor:

During the last week several pieces of information have come to my attention which I find quite distressing and feel the student body should be made aware of. These are not only matters of student concern but matters which we as students can react to and act upon.

First, I have been informed (through the workings of the Learning Resources Committee) that 578 volumes (hard bound texts) and hundreds of professional journals, many of them irreplaceable, were stolen from the Behrend College Library last year. The total loss incurred by the library (and thusly incurred by the students) was estimated at over \$7,500 with departmental allocations for 1975-76 averaging only \$319. There is often justifiable criticism of the inadequacy of the library facilities and actions such as these only serve to antagonize the already poor situation. I feel it the responsibility of each student at the Behrend College to exert a bit of social pressure on the individuals responsible for these thefts as the monetary and academic losses directly effect all of us.

The Faculty Committee on Learning Resources was also informed that the use of the library was second lowest among all Commonwealth Campuses of Penn State and the inadequacy of funds could be partially attributable to this. It is also disconcerting to note that the funds for our "little library" have been cut by 23 per cent from last year, probably facilitated by the lack of usage. So, get in there and take a few books out just to help yourself.

Now, for the next problem. The Faculty Committee for Academic Planning has been looking into the possibilities of irradiating common hour. For those of you not familiar with common hour, it is that magical time on every Tuesday and Thursday third period, when (supposedly) no classes are to be scheduled and also the time when many faculty and student committees set aside for meetings. It is my opinion, and the opinion of many other in-

formed faculty, students, and administrators, that the termination of common hour would be disastrous for most organizations on campus and could only serve to further confuse the already maddening bureaucratic process.

Now, last but not least, a personal commentary which, to the best of my knowledge, accurately reflects the attitudes of most resident students. We all know our resident area coordinators... or do we?! Well, we have John Giesmann, Beverly Romberger, and what's his name in Perry Hall. Who ever he is I wish he would introduce himself as I have never seen or met him. My point is simple, these are salaried employees positioned as such to serve the resident students. Have you ever tried to find one of them when they are needed? Good luck! When you would rather not see them they are as ubiquitous as the leaves in fall—when you really need a "residence area coordinator" you'll have a hell of a time finding one. Try to start a harmless, tension-reducing, inter-dormitory verbal battle and they emerge from their secret hiding places like storm troopers with their band of merry RA's. But try to get into your room when you're locked out—go ahead, try—you may end up sleeping in the hall (unless of course you open a can of beer and they will be right there to protect you from yourself.)

Nothing personal, you understand!

Respectfully submitted,
Michael J. Woods
Student-Body President

Dear Editor:

Without going into political ideology, I would simply like to voice my opposition to having ROTC on Behrend Campus. I do not want to sound like a fugitive of the 60's, but the establishment of a branch of the ROTC here is an insult to any socially conscious person. I kindly request the "braintrust" of Behrend Campus to reconsider their decision.

Respectfully yours,
Robert P. Radziszewski
3rd term L.A.
(Soc.) major

Behrend Collegian

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Photographers: Lynn Boone, Jeff Urraro, Dan Haley.

Typists: Michele Crotty, Kathy Weiser

Mailing Address: Behrend College, Station Road, Erie, Pa. 16510

Office - Student Offices, Reed Union Building

Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

Phone: 899-3101 Ext. 238

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The editorials appearing in this newspaper will be opinionated and therefore subject to criticism. All letters that are typewritten of 200 words or less, and submitted to the newspaper staff will be printed with the exception of those that are repetitions or in poor taste. The staff reserves the right to correct

or delete portions of all letters for publication purposes.

All letters must be signed, but names will be withheld upon request. Term standing, major, and hometown must be included.

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